

# **Nikita's Grade: Responding to Parent Concerns (1)**

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## **Standard 4**

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

### **Knowledge**

The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:  
Emerging issues and trends that potentially impact the school community  
The conditions and dynamics of the diverse school community

### **Dispositions**

The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:  
Collaboration and communication with families  
Families as partners in the education of their children  
The proposition that families have the best interests of their children in mind

### **Performances**

The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:  
Credence is given to individuals and groups whose values and opinions may conflict  
Community stakeholders are treated equitably

## **Nikita's Grade (1)**

Mr. Alvin Haines is principal of Washington Elementary School. He just received the following letter from the parent of a fourth grade student. The parent expresses concern about the physical education teacher, Oscar Schultz.

November 15

Dear Dr. Haines,

I am writing you because of concern about my daughter, Nikita Kildare's Gym Class grade being a "D". Nikita states she has dressed out and done everything her gym teacher (Mr. Shoolts) told her to do.

Last Tuesday I had a conference with Mr. Shoolts. His reply to me why Nikita received a "D" out of his class was because of her attitude. However, Mr. Shoolts didn't deny Nikita's statement about dressing out and doing the exercises. My response to him was that I didn't understand how he could substantiate giving Nikita a "D" because of her attitude when she has never been written up or sent to the office for bad behavior. I'm told by the students that if you're a problem, he doesn't hesitate sending you to the office.

Miss Patterson, Nikita's homeroom teacher told me Mr. Shoolts didn't have a grade for Nikita the day report cards were given out. She sent Nikita to him to ask about her grade.

I personally believe Mr. Shoolts gave Nikita a grade off the top of his head. If this is the way he grades students it is unfair. Mr. Shoolts most likely has a lot of personal problems that he is not able to cope with. I also talked with a couple of Nikita's teachers about her behavior. They seem to think her attitude is great. Dr. Haines I have heard some unfavorable talk about Mr. Shoolts from Nikita and other students. However, I don't know whether the statements are true, but the girls are talking among themselves that Mr. Shoolts tries to fumble over them. This they don't like. If this is the case, Mr. Shoolts has a serious problem. I am hoping that you Dr. Haines will look into the matter.

Thank you.

Carolyn Freeman

(1) Quoted from Lee, Sharon S. (1992) Hegemony in an Elementary School: The Principal as OrganicIntellectual, unpublished dissertation (University of Missouri-St.Louis).

**Instructor's Notes and Scoring Guide**  
For  
**Nikita's Grade:**  
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**Notes to Instructors**

This case study focuses on Standard 4. Completion of the case study activity will require 90 to 120 minutes of one class depending on how instructors adapt the activity to meet the needs and interests of their students. It would be helpful, but not essential, for students to have access to computers for word processing.

**Suggested sequence of activities:**

- Distribute copies of the parent letter and directions to students.
- Organize students in small groups of two to three members.
- Group members will collaborate to write a letter to the parent which:
  - Sets a future date to meet with the parent
  - Explains the steps they will go through to respond to the parent's concerns.
- Group members will collaborate to write a memo to the superintendent which:
  - Summarizes the situation
  - Explains the steps to be taken to respond to the parent's concerns

***The following scoring guide can be used to evaluate both the letter to the parent and the memo to the superintendent.***

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**Knowledge:**

The administrator has knowledge and understanding of

- Emerging issues and trends that potentially impact the school community:
  - 3 pts. for clear, consistent and convincing evidence
  - 2 pts. for clear evidence, although uneven in depth and scope
  - 1 pt. for limited evidence
  - 0 pts. for little or no evidence
- The conditions and dynamics of the diverse school community
  - 3 pts. for clear, consistent and convincing evidence
  - 2 pts. for clear evidence, although uneven in depth and scope
  - 1 pt. for limited evidence
  - 0 pts. for little or no evidence

**Dispositions:**

The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:

- Collaboration and communication with families
  - 3 pts. for clear, consistent and convincing evidence
  - 2 pts. for clear evidence, although uneven in depth and scope

- 1 pt. for limited evidence
  - 0 pts. for little or no evidence
- Families as partners in the education of their children
  - 3 pts. for clear, consistent and convincing evidence
  - 2 pts. for clear evidence, although uneven in depth and scope
  - 1 pt. for limited evidence
  - 0 pts. for little or no evidence
- The proposition that families have the best interests of their children in mind
  - 3 pts. for clear, consistent and convincing evidence
  - 2 pts. for clear evidence, although uneven in depth and scope
  - 1 pt. for limited evidence
  - 0 pts. for little or no evidence

**Performances:**

The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:

- Credence is given to individuals and groups whose values and opinions may conflict
  - 3 pts. for clear, consistent and convincing evidence
  - 2 pts. for clear evidence, although uneven in depth and scope
  - 1 pt. for limited evidence
  - 0 pts. for little or no evidence
- Community stakeholders are treated equitably
  - 3 pts. for clear, consistent and convincing evidence
  - 2 pts. for clear evidence, although uneven in depth and scope
  - 1 pt. for limited evidence
  - 0 pts. for little or no evidence